THE Chief Principles OF POPERY CONFUTED BY Scripture and Reason,

SHEWING

That *Peter* was not, and that the *Pope* is not the Rock upon which the Church is Built, but Christ alone, *&c.*

AND

That the *Pope*, nor *Priests*, hath no more Authority from God to Forgive SINS as they are committed against him, then one Traytor hath to Forgive another Treason committed against the KING; and also shewing how far Men may, and ought to Forgive Sins.

Isa. 18. 20. *And to the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word; it is because they had no Light in them.*

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The ſence and meaning of Matth. xvi *from* Verſ xiii. *to the* xxiii. *and alſo of* John *the* 1. 42. *and of* John 20. 22, 23. *occaſioned by a Diſcourſe with two or three Friends.*

WHen our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, asked his Apoſtles, *Whom do men ſay that I the Son of man am?* and they ſaid, that is, all the Apoſtles joyntly aſſenting, though perhaps but one ſpake, as *Peter* for himſelf and the reſt, and they ſaid, ſome ſay thou art *John* the Baptiſt, ſome *Elias*, and others *Jeremias*, or one of the Prophets, and he ſaid unto them, *But whom ſay ye that I am?* and *Peter* anſwered for himſelf and the reſt, as he did above, *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the Living God*; and *Jeſus* anſwered and ſaid unto him, *Bleſſed art thou Simon Bar-jona*, for Fleſh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven; and dare any deny but this truth, that Chriſt was the Son of the living God, was

revealed to the reſt of the Apoſtles, as well as unto *Peter*, and I ſay unto thee, thou art *Peter*, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the *Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*; that is, ſaith St. *Hierom*, Sins ſhall not prevail againſt the Church; but, *Papiſts* ſay, that *Peter* is the Rock on which the Church is built, and that to *Peter* and to the *Popes*, as *Peter*'s Succeſſors, this promiſe was made, that the Gates of Hell ſhould not prevail againſt the Church, thus built upon *Peter* and the *Popes*, and that they ſhould not erre.

To this I anſwer, That Chriſt did not ſay, thou art *Peter*, and upon thee I will build my Church; No, but Chriſt ſaid, thou art *Peter*, and upon this Rock, meaning himſelf, as if he had ſaid in plain words, thou art *Peter*; and, thou haſt for thy Self, and thy Brethren, confeſſed Me to be Chriſt, the Son of the living God, and I ſay unto thee, that upon this Rock, *Chriſt*, the Son of the living God, I will build my Church, *&c.* Now, this is the ſence and meaning of the Text: I ſhall prove by other Scripture, as in the 1 *Cor.* 10. 3, 4. It is ſaid of the Church of the *Jewes* in the Wilderneſs, that they did all eat the ſame Spiritual Meat, and did all drink the ſame Spiritual Drink, for they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was *Chriſt*, Where then was *Peter*, and the *Pope*? Dare any Papiſts ſay, that either *Peter* or the *Pope* was the Rock, on which the Church was built then, for the ſame that was the Rock then, is the Rock now, for the Apoſtle ſaith, they did eat and drink the ſame Spiritual meat and drink that we do, for the Church in the Wilderneſs did then eat and drink Chriſt the Rock ſpiritually by Faith, as we

Chriſt was the Rock to the Church in the Wilderneſs, and He is the Rock ſtill to Us.

we now in the Sacrament, do eat and drink the ſame Rock, *Chriſt*, ſpiritually by Faith, as Chriſt was the Rock of the Church then, ſo is he the Rock of the Church now, there was no *Romiſh Pope* in the Wilderneſs, nor then when Chriſt ſaid the Church ſhould be built upon the Rock, for who is a Rock, ſave our God, 2 *Sam.* 22. 32. I could quote Forty Texts of Scripture, where God is called a Rock, but all the Papiſts in the World cannot produce one Text of Scripture, where either *Peter* or the *Pope* is called a Rock, in one place *Peter* is called a ſtone, which I ſhall ſpeak to anon, but *Peter* himſelf calls *Chriſt* a Rock of offence to them that ſtumble at the Word, as the *Papiſts* do, whereunto *Peter* ſaith they were appointed, 1 *Pet.* 2. 8. and whereas the *Jewes* did, and we do eat and drink Chriſt the Rock ſpiritually by faith, according to the Scripture, the Papiſts think to eat and drink Chriſt carnally and fleſhly with their teeth, according to their own fond deviſing, contrary to the Scriptures, *Joh.* 1. 42. When *Jeſus* beheld *Peter*, he ſaid, thou art *Simon*, thou ſhalt be called *Cephas*, which is by interpretation a ſtone, but there is a great difference between one ſtone and a Rock, for there are many ſtones in one Rock, therefore *Peter* cannot be the Rock, on which the Church is built; a Rock conſiſts of many ſtones, and ſo doth the myſtical Body of Chriſt, conſiſt of many living ſtones: Chriſt is the Rock, and every Believer is a living ſtone in this Rock Chriſt, ſo ſaith *Peter* himſelf, ſpeaking of Believers, he ſaith, *Ye alſo as living ſtones are built up a ſpiritual Houſe*, a Holy Prieſt-hood to offer up Spiritual Sacrifice acceptable to God, by *Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. 2, 5. Here you have *Peter*'s own Teſtimony, that

Chriſt

Christ is the Rock, and every believer is a living ſtone in this Rock, Chriſt.

Chriſt is the Rock on which the Church is built, and every Believer is a living ſtone in this Rock, and *Peter* himſelf was but one living ſtone in the Rock, with other Believers, and not the Rock it ſelf, as *Papiſts* falſly pretend, for even as Chriſt is the Head of the Church, and every believer a myſtical member of his Body, even ſo *Chriſt* is the Rock, and every *Believer is a myſtical living ſtone in the Rock Chriſt*. So that from hence the upſhot, or concluſion is this, Chriſt is our Rock, on whom our Church is built, and from whom by faith in Him we hope to have Salvation, and *Peter* is the Papiſts ſtone, on which ſandy foundation the *Romiſh* Church is built, by whom (I mean *Peter*) there is no ſalvation to be looked for, for the Papiſts do abſolutely deny Chriſt to be the Rock, on which their Church is built, but ſay it is built upon *Peter*; and whilſt they do ſo, they have neither part, nor any portion in Chriſt, nor his merits or righteouſneſs, for whoſoever denies Chriſt before men, them will *Chriſt* deny before his Father which is in Heaven, *Matth* 10. 33. For there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we can be ſaved (but the name of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, Acts 4. 12. And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the Law of *Moſes*, Acts 13. 39. The Law of *Moſes* was, do this and live, *Lev.* 18. 5. According to which Papiſts think to be juſtified and ſaved by their works, but never yet was any Man ſo juſtified and ſaved.

And whereas they not only ſay that *Peter* could not, nor the Pope as *Peter*'s Succeſſor cannot erre, becauſe of the promiſe, *That the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt the Church*; but, they ſay alſo, that *Peter* received the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, to open it and ſhut it, to bind and looſe; hence they ſay, the Pope, as *Peter*'s Succeſſor, hath power to open, or ſhut, to bind, and looſe, and forgive ſins.

For anſwer, It is already proved, that *Peter* was not the Rock on which the Church was built, therefore neither *Peter* was, nor the Pope is not the Church, to whom the promiſe was made, that the Gates of Hell ſhould not prevail againſt it; I ſhall firſt ſhew you, St. *Auguſtine*, and St. *Ambroſe*, their judgment upon this Text, *Auguſtine* in his Sermon of the Nativity, and ſpeaking of St. *Peter*, and St. *Paul*, he ſaith, that when Chriſt ſaid unto *Peter*, Matth. 16. 19. *To thee I give the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, &c. He ſaith, that *Peter* repreſented the Perſon of the Church, ſo as he did not receive the Keys as one man, that he and his Succeſſors ſhould only uſe them; but as one Man, he received them for the whole Church: and in another place, where it is ſaid, *Loveſt thou me, and feed my ſheep*, he ſaith it was ſpoken unto all the faithful Paſtors and Officers of the Church, as well as unto *Peter*, and that the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven were given to the whole Church, in the Perſon of *Peter*: But, ſuppoſe they had been given unto *Peter*, as Papiſts falſly pretend, there is not one word in all the Scripture, that they ſhould be given to the Pope, as

Auguſtin ſaith the Keyes was given to the Church, & not to Peter.

Peter's

Peters succeſſor to open or ſhut Heaven, for whom or againſt whom he pleaſeth, as he makes the People believe he can. And St. *Ambroſe*, ſpeaking of the ſame words, *Feed my Sheep*; he ſaith that *Peter* took no charge of them himſelf alone, but took charge with the reſt of the Apoſtles, and all faithful Paſtors, equally together: Or elſe how could the Prieſts as well as the Pope, pretend a Power to Abſolve and Forgive, for one man cannot give that power to another, therefore the charge is equal to all faithful Paſtours of the Church.

Secondly, That *Peter* did err, if you look but two or three Verſes after, where Chriſt gave the Keys, that from that time forth began Jeſus to ſhew unto his Diſciples; that he muſt go unto *Jeruſalem*, and ſuffer many things of the Elders and chief Prieſts, and Scribes, and be Killed, and Raiſed again the third day; then *Peter* took him and began to rebuke him, ſaying, Be it far from the Lord, this ſhall not be unto thee: But Chriſt turned, and ſaid unto *Peter*; *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of men.* Now, dare any *Papiſt* ſay, that *Peter* did not err, who thus rebuked and contradicted Chriſt; that when Chriſt ſaid, he muſt ſuffer ſuch and ſuch things: *Peter* ſaid it ſhould not be ſo. If *Peter* had not erred, Chriſt would not have compared him with the Devil, ſaying, *Get thee behind me Satan*, &c. And to do this after he had been ſo long with Chriſt, and inſtructed by him; it was an Aggravation of his errour. If *Papiſts* will yet ſay that

Peter erred in contradicting Chriſt.

Peter

Peter erred not, let them go on ſtill in their errour; *And they that are filthy, let them be filthy ſtill.*

Thirdly, Not long after *Peter* erred again, in denying his Maſter Chriſt with curſing and ſwearing, as in *Mat.* 26. 74. And was not this an errour neither? Nay, doth not the *Pope*, and all *Papiſts* err, and contradict Chriſt, that ſay *Peter* did not err? For in ſo ſaying, they do in effect charge Chriſt with errour, for calling *Peter* Satan, and rebuking him without cauſe, if he did not err: And is not all this ſufficient to prove that *Peter* did err? And that he was not the Rock on which the Church is built? And that neither *Peter*, nor the *Pope*, nor *Cardinals*, is the Church to whom the promiſe was made, *That the Gates of Hell ſhould not prevail againſt it.* For hear you ſee *Peter* did err; and beſides *Paul* charges him with diſſimulation, and withſtood him to his face, *Gal.* 2. 11, 12, 13. Much more doth the *Pope* and *Cardinals* err, in uſurping ſuch a Power to themſelves; for there is not a word in all the Scripture, that the *Pope* or *Biſhop* of *Rome*, ſhould be *Peters* ſucceſſor in quality of a Head of the Univerſal Church, or that he ſhould not err. For how could *Peter* give that to the *Pope* which he had not himſelf, either to be Head of the Church, or that he ſhould not err, or that all other Churches ſhould receive Orders from *Rome*; but rather the quite contrary: For it was Propheſied, that the Law ſhould go forth of *Zion*, and the Word of the Lord from *Jeruſalem*, *Iſa.* 2. 3. So that if there ſhould have been any Head of the Univerſal Church beſides Chriſt, to give Laws to the Church, it ſhould by

Peter erred in denying Chriſt, with curſing and ſwearing.

this Propheſie have been from *Jeruſalem*, and not from *Rome*; ſo that the Papiſts fained pretences is but Antichriſtian, and Heathenish uſurpation, and not of Gods Divine Inſtitution.

But the Papiſts further Object, that Chriſt prayed for *Peter*, that his Faith ſhould not fail, *Luke* 22. 32. To this Objection, *Auguſtine* doth anſwer and ſaith: That certain things are ſpoken, as though they ſeemed properly to belong unto *Peter*; which have no evident ſenſe but when they are referred to the Church, the perſon whereof *Peter*, is underſtood Figuratively to repreſent; for ſaith he, Did he pray for *Peter*, and did he not pray for *James* and *John*, and the reſt of the Apoſtles. It is manifeſt (ſaith he) that under the Name of *Peter* all others of the Church are contained, as in *John* 17. *I prayed for all thoſe that thou haſt given me*; otherwiſe the truth could not conſiſt: For within a while after, *Peter* failed for a time by denying his Maſter, and yet Chriſts Prayer took effect in reference to the Church, whoſe Perſon *Peter* did repreſent. For the Churches Faith did not fail, but did always, and ſtill doth perſevere; but this Church was not the Church of *Rome*, for then there was no Church of Chriſt at *Rome*, but *Heathens*; and now under a pretence of Religion, the *Papiſts* doth the true Church of Chriſt more hurt then the *Heathens*; for a pretended Friend being an Enemy, is more dangerous then an open profeſſed Enemy. By the Church in Scripture ſenſe, we underſtand a Congregation or Society of true Believers, whether they be Rich or Poor, it's no matter: And thus the Nineteenth Article of the Church of *England* deſcribes a Viſible Church of Chriſt to be, A Congregation of Faithful,

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men, in the which the pure Word of God is Preached, and the Sacraments duely Miniſtred according to Chriſts Ordinance, in all thoſe things that of neceſſity are requiſite to the ſame. The Church of Believers is the Spouſe of Chriſt, but the *Pope*, if what he ſaith were true, is but Chriſts Vicar; and no Lord or Governour did ever appoint or ordain, that his Wife o Spouſe ſhould be in ſubjection to his Vicar, as to the Government of the Family; *And the whole Family of Heaven and Earth, is Chriſts*, Epheſ. 3. 15. It therefore the Vicar Tranſgreſs and live Viciouſly, the Wife or Spouſe hath Authority in the Family in her Husbands perſonal abſence, to diſplace the Vicar, that he do not infect the Family, and to ſet another in his ſtead if need ſo require; for the Wife is of more Authority then the Vicar, for ſo much as ſhe is one Body with her Husband. Hence it followeth, that the Church of Believers which is Chriſts Spouſe, is of more Authority then the *Pope*, which is but Chriſts pretended Vicar. But it is further Objected by the *Papiſts*, as to the *Pope* and *Clergies* power to forgive ſins: *That Chriſt breathed on his Diſciples, and ſaid unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghoſt; whoſoever ſins ye remit, they are remited unto them, and whoſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained*, John 20. 22, 23.

what is meant by Church in Scripture ſenſe.

To this Objection, I anſwer: Firſt, That the blind *Phariſees* in their Ignorance, could ſee further into this Text, then the quickeſt ſighted *Papiſts*, for they could ſay, *Who can forgive ſins but God only*, Mark 2. 7. That is as ſins are committed againſt God, but we are commanded to forgive one another, as ſins are

committed against us; and therefore we are taught to pray, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, even as we forgive them that Treſpaſs against us.* And when Peter ſaid unto Chriſt, *How oft ſhall my Brother ſin against me, and I forgive him?* He doth not ſay, *How oft ſhall he ſin againſt thee, and I forgive him*: But how oft ſhall he ſin againſt me, and I forgive him, till ſeven time? Jeſus ſaid unto him, *I ſay not unto thee until ſeven times, but until ſeventy times ſeven*, Mat. 18. 21, 22. and in Luke 17. 4. *If thy Brother treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſeven times in a day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent, thou ſhalt forgive him.* Thus for us, from our hearts, to remit ſins as they are committed againſt us, upon ous Brothers repentance, I doubt not but they are remitted in Heaven; and this we are bound in duty and conſcience to do. For Chriſt ſaith, *Mat. 6. 15. If ye forgive not others their treſpaſſes, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your treſpaſſes.* Secondly, take notice of the words of the Text, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt, whoſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted*: Hence I obſerve, that no man can effectually, and freely from his heart, forgive ſins committed againſt him, but ſuch as have in ſome meaſure received the Holy Ghoſt, or are moved by the Holy Ghoſt to forgive them, for God knows the meaning of his own Spirit, becauſe it makes interceſſion for the Saints, according to the will God, *Rom.* 8. 27. And always with our forgiving of our Brother, we ought to pray for our Brother, that God

How far a man can forgive ſins.

No man can forgive his Brother nor pray for him, but by the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt.

God may forgive him, and no man can pray aright, but by the assistance of the Holy Ghost: And the Apostle saith, *The pray r of faith shall save the sick, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him*, James 5. 15. and verse 16. *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another* (that is, when the Brother offending cometh to the Brother offended, saying, I repent, as is said above) *this is to confess your faults one to another, and to pray one for another, that ye may be healed; the effectual fervent prayer of a Righteous man, availeth much*, James 5. 15, 16.

Thus far, I think, I have made it clear what is meant by Remitting or Forgiving of sins committed against us, according to the Word of God; *But forasmuch as we are all Children of wrath by Nature*, Ephes. 2. 3. And so by Nature we are all Enemies and Traytors to God. And upon this account, is is not possibly that either *Pope* or *Prelate* can forgive sins, as they are committed against God, no more then one Traytor can forgive another Traytor his Treason committed against the King; for none can forgive sins as they are committed againh God, but God on-

No Traytor can forgive another Traytor his Treason against the King.

Mark 2. 7. and *Isa.* 43. 25. *The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give Repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins*, Acts 5. 30, 31. But the *Pope* nor *Prelates* cannot give Repentance, therefore the *Pope* cannot give Forgiveness of sins, as sins are committed against God. Again, *Without sheding of Blood there is no Remission of sins*, Heb. 9. 22. But the *Pope* nor *Prelates*, doth not shed their blood for the people, therefore the *Pope* nor *Prelates*, cannot

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give remiſſion of ſins unto the people; hence alſo it follows, that the Popiſh unbloody ſacrifice of the Maſs, is no propitiatory ſacrifice for ſins, neither for the quick nor the dead, as the Papiſts falſly pretend, for where there is remiſſion of ſin, there is no more offering for ſin, as there is daily in the Maſs, *Heb.* 10. 18.

But to this it is replyed again, that when Chriſt gave the Keyes to *Peter*, he gave him power alſo to bind and looſe, with a promiſe that what he ſhould bind on Earth, ſhould be bound in Heaven, and what he ſhould looſe on Earth, ſhould be looſed in Heaven; *Matth.* 16. 19.

Anſwer, that it hath already been proved, that *Peter* received not the Keyes for himſelf, and for the Pope, as his Succeſſor, but for the whole Church, whoſe perſon *Peter* figuratively did then repreſent, as ſaith St. *Auguſtine*, for further proof whereof, what is meant by binding and looſing, and who they are that do bind and looſe, and how they bind and looſe, you may take notice, that the very ſame promiſe which was made to *Peter*, as repreſenting the Church, the ſame promiſe, and in the ſame words is made to the Church, *Matth.* 18. 18. Where Chriſt inſtructed his Diſciples, how to deal with an offending Brother, *Viz.* Firſt, to admoniſh him privately, and if he did not reform: Then, 2dly, To take one or two more, and if he would not hear them: Then, 3dly, To tell it to the Church, and if he neglect to hear the Church, not if he neglect to hear the Pope, or Cardinals, but if he neglect to hear the Church, let

The ſame promiſe that was made to Peter, is made to the Church of Believers.

let him be unto thee as an Heathen man, and a Publican, and then follows, *Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven*; This was spoken unto the Church, to whom the complaint was to be made, for if the Church had not power given them by Christ, to hear, and judge, and determin, in such cases, wherefore should Christ direct his Disciples to bring the complaint before the *Church*, and promise, that whatsoever the shall bind or loose on Earth, shall be bound or loosed in Heaven, but not one word of loosing in Purgatory, under or in the Earth, but on the Earth; and then follows in Vers. 20. for *where two or three are gathered in my Name, there am I in the midst of them*; All men understand this to be spoken to the Church of Believers, together with the Apostles as their Pastors, and not to the Apostles alone, or a part from the believers.

Therefore the Pope and Cardinals, Priests and Deacons, cannot be the Church without the Believers, for there was no such creatures as Popes and Cardinals in the World, except among Heathens, there was some such like Idolatrous Offices, when Christ gave this power, and made this promise to the Church, neither was the Apostles themselves ever called or reputed to be the Church, though they were all united together, but as they were joyned with other believers, and were the Churches Pastors, as *Peter* was Pastor of the circumcision, and *Paul* of the uncircumcision and the like, (for when *Peter* was in Prison, and prayer was made of the Church unto God for him, the Apostles were dispersed, by reason of

The Pope and Cardinals are not the Church.

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the perſecution, and this Church that prayed for *Peter*, was a company of believers, met at the Houſe of *Mary*, the Mother of *John*, where many were met together praying, *Acts* 12. 5. *and* 12 *verſes*, but there was never a Pope, nor Cardinal, or the like amongſt them, the Scripture makes mention of many ſuch Churches in particular Houſes.

The Apoſtle *Paul* had as much authority given him by Chriſt among the uncircumciſion, as *Peter* had amongſt the circumciſion, yet ſhould not *Paul* take the power to himſelf, that belonged to the Church to excommunicate the inceſtious Perſon, but write to the Church of *Corinth*, that when they were gathered together, they ſhould deliver ſuch a one unto Satan, for the deſtruction of the fleſh, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. And again in the 2 *Cor.* 2. 7, 8. When *Paul* heard of his Repentance, he wrote to them again, that the Church ſhould receive him to Communion again, and confirm their love towards him, this ſhews the Churches power to bind a Tranſgreſſor until he repenteth, and upon his repentance, to receive him again into Church-fellowſhip, for they againſt whom the tranſgreſſion is committed, whether it be againſt the Church, or againſt a particular perſon, they upon the parties repentance have a power, and ought to remit, as it is a tranſgreſſion againſt them, but as it is againſt God, none can remit it, but God.

How the Church doth bind and looſe.

But ſinners are miniſterially looſed from their ſins, in the preaching of the Word of God, and applying of

of the promiſes of the Goſpel, to ſuch as believe and repent, and thoſe whoſe hearts God is pleaſed to open at the preaching of the Word,

What is meant by Miniſterial looſing from ſins.

that when the Paſtor or Teacher doth in the Name of Chriſt, and by his Word aſſure perſons, that if they break off from their ſinful ways, and believe and repent, their ſins ſhall be forgiven them, thoſe I ſay whoſe hearts God is pleaſed to open, thus to receive the Word and believe it, this is to ſuch perſons a miniſtry of reconciliation, and a looſing of them from their ſins, and whoſoever is thus looſed on earth by the right preaching and applying of the Word and promiſes of the Goſpel unto them, there is no doubt but God will ratifie, confirm and looſe in Heaven, this is to bring ſuch perſons in to Chriſts Sheep-fold, and to make them new creatures, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. For *Faith cometh by hearing, and how ſhall men hear without a Preacher, and how ſhall they preach except they be ſent*, Rom. 10. But, neither Pope, nor Cardinal, Jeſuit, Monk, nor Frier, nor any of that crue are of Gods ſending, for there is no ſuch Church-Officers named in the new Teſtament, nor no promiſe that their preaching or prating ſhall work Faith in the Hearers, and without *Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, Heb. 11. 6. Hence it is clear, that Popiſh Maſſes is not a means appointed of God, to convert ſinners, nor to work Faith in Mens hearts.

And when the Word of God is plainly and powerfully preached, by Miniſters of *Chriſt*'s ſending, and the promiſes held forth in the Miniſtry of the Word, and perſons invited to receive the glad tidings of the Go-

ſpel and Miniſters in *Chriſt*'s Name pray, intreat, and beſeech ſinners to forſake their ſins, and be reconciled unto God, as in 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. and alſo declare the danger of continuing in ſin, and the irrecoverable deſtruction that will follow, if the proffers of mercy and grace be ſlighted and neglected, but that after ſuch means uſed to recover them out of the ſnares of ſin and Satan, thoſe that will ſtill harden their Hearts againſt ſuch means and offers of grace and mercy, and go on in a way of ſin, ſuch a Miniſtry is to ſuch perſons a miniſtration of death and condemnation, and a binding of them over to the juſt Judgment of God for their unbelief and hardneſs of heart, this is moſt meet to bind ſinners in their ſins, for who knows whether God will any more make them the like offer of grace and mercy, as in *Jer.* 18. 7. 8, 9. At what inſtance I ſhall ſpeak concerning a Nation or Kingdom, and ſo concerning a particular perſon, to pluck up and pull down, to build and to plant, if they do evil in my ſight, and obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good, where-with I ſaid I would benefit them, ſee alſo *Iſai.* 22 12, 13, 14. And in that Day did the Lord God of Hoſts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldneſs, and to girding with Sack-cloth, *and behold joy and gladneſs, ſlaying Oxen, and killing Sheep, eating Fleſh and drinking Wine, &c. and it was reveal'd in mine ear by the Lord of Hoſts*: Surely this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till ye die *ſaith the Lord of Hoſts*, and this I take to be the miniſterial binding and loſing of ſins, by the Rulers of the Church, they can go no

What is meant by a miniſterial binding in ſins.

The Popes curſe doth not bind, nor his bleſſing looſe.

no further according to the Word of God, then is declared above, for the Popes cursing doth not bind any man, nor his blessings loose any man any other ways; for usually the Pope doth bless those whom God doth curse, and curse those whom God doth bless, as *Psal.* 109. 28. *Let them curse, but bless thou, &c.* and *Prov.* 3. 33. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked,* and those are they the Pope doth bless if they will but murther or poyson Kings, and betray Kings and Kingdomes, *&c.* they have his blessing.

If to sit on Christs right or left hand in Christs Kingdom, was not Christs to give, but his Fathers, as Christ himself said, *Matth.* 20. 23. Is it not a wonder that any men should believe that the *Pope*, Cardinals, or Priests, should forgive sins, and so give men a place at the right or left hand of Christ in his Kingdom, which Christ said was not his to give, are not all they under a spirit of delusion, who think or believe that the *Pope* can give that to men, which Christ, as he was man, could not give, and yet these deceiving false Prophets bear the people in hand, that they can loose them from their sins, and give them a place in Heaven, or bind men in their sins, and send them to Hell, and thus these false Teachers destroy and damn Millions of Souls, in blind ignorance, and make themselves Antichrists, in teaching the people thus contrary, and against *Christ's* teaching.

For, seeing it belongs to none, but God, to know the secrets of the heart, and heart-sins, it belongs to none but God, to forgive sins, *Cyrillus Alexandrinus*, in his Fourth Book, on *John*, saith, Truly it belongeth

to none, but the true God, to have power to loose any man from their sins, for to whom else is it lawful to deliver the prevaricators of the Law, but to him who is the Author of the Law.

Again, it is to be considered, that pardoning sins, like a Judge, cannot belong to any, but to him that is Judg of conscience, and who knows the secrets of the heart, the intentions and affections, and the nature and sinfulness of every sin, and seeing the Pope, Cardinals, and Priests, *&c.* knoweth not all these, they are incapable to Judge, and to Forgive sins, though Cardinal *Bellarmin*, in *lib. 3. de perist. cap. 2.* saith, that the Priest in giving Absolution, Judgeth a Sute between God and the sinner; But, how can the Priest be a competent Judge between God and a sinner, seeing as is said above, the Priest cannot search, nor see into the conscience of a sinner, and therefore cannot be judge of the conscience, nor doth he know the secret sins of the heart, and therefore cannot be Judge of the sins of the heart, neither can they know the outward sinful actions of a Man's life, and if the sinner confessing, either do not confess all, or have forgotten, doth the Pope, or Priest think that God hath forgotten also; however, if the sinner promise to do the penance the Priest injoines him, either by himself, or hire another to do his penance for him, how hypocritically soever it be done, the Priest doth usually judge the Sute of the sinners side, and God is cast in the Sute, by the Absolution of an adulterous vicious Priest,

The Pope &c. knoweth not the secrets of the heart, and conscience; and therefore he cannot be Judge of the heart and conscience.

Prieſt, if the *Popiſh* Doctrine and practice were true: But what men of underſtanding can believe them? For it is certain, if God would have eſtabliſhed a Judg on Earth to forgive ſins, he would alſo have given him the knowledg of the hearts and conſciences of ſuch as ſhould come unto him to ask forgiveneſs, otherwiſe his Judgment and Abſolution could not be valued; for God who decreeth the end of every ſuch Action, he alſo giveth juſt and neceſſary means to attain the end.

Moreover, it is alſo neceſſary that he that ſhall be Judg of ſinners, to forgive ſins; that he ſhould alſo be Judg of ſouls, and have them in his power, and be able to puniſh ſouls which are Spiritual and Immortal, with puniſhments ſutable to their Nature; that is with Spiritual and Eternal puniſhments: But neither *Pope*, *Cardinal*, *Prelate*, nor *Prieſt*, hath any ſure power, they can but have power over the Bodies of men, and not over their ſouls; therefore they cannot forgive the ſins that are charged upon mens ſouls; none of them can by any means Redeem his Brother, nor ſatisfie Gods Juſtice for one another, as they pretend, nor give God a Ranſome for him; *For the Redemption of their ſoul is precious, and it ceaſeth for ever*, Pſal. 49 7 8. A Judg cannot exempt the Guilty from any puniſhment, but that which by virtue of his Office he may inflict, that puniſhment he may again remit which he inflicted; But this is not to Abſolve before Gods Judgment Seat: Private perſons forgive one another, but not meaning thereby to prejudicate the Judgment of God. How can a ſinner

No man can puniſh the ſoul, therefore he cannot forgive the ſins of the ſoul.

ner (who it may be is a greater sinner) give Absolution and Pardon to one less sinful then himself? Besides, as one saith, and that truly, That the Decrees of God are Eternal, and Gods Councel and Order for Remitting such and such mens sins, was past before the Foundation of the World: And can a *Priest* by Retaining such mens sins, and denying them Absolution, alter the Order of Gods Counsel, and give Elect persons to the Devil to be damned, whom God hath predestinated to be saved: Or how doth the *Priest* know, whether his sentence be conformable to Gods Decree? Or if the *Priest* Absolve a man, whom God hath Reprobated? Shall the *Priests* Absolution, or Gods Decree and Determination stand; for without the knowledg of the secrets of the heart and conscience, and the sins of the soul and power over it; neither *Pope* or *Priest*, can give Absolution and Forgiveness of sins unto any man. So that the Prophet *Ezekiel* saith, may justly be charged upon the *Pope*, and saith, *Ye have not kept the charge of my holy things, but ye have set keepers of my charge in my Sanctuary for your selves*, Ezek. 44. 8. As if he had said, Ye have not set Pastors in my Sanctuary to keep in charge, that was Pastors of my Institution and appointment; but ye have set Pastors in my Sanctuary, that to me are strangers, uncircumcised in heart and in flesh, not of my Institution, but your own, to uphold your Hierarchy and Dignity in the World. This I gather from *verse* 7. and it follows, *No stranger uncircumcised in heart or flesh, shall enter into my Sanctuary*: And the Levites, and so of popish Priests, that are gone away from me after their Idols, they shall bear their Iniquity, and they shall not come near unto me (meaning

ing with our acceptance) to do the Office of a Priest, *Ezek.* 44. 7. to the 13. Hence I conclude with the saying in *Job.* 15. 12, 13. *why doth thine heart carry thee away* (that is from the Institutions and Ways of Christ) *and what doth thine eyes wink at, that thou turnest thy spirit against God.* For he saith of a wicked man, *That the steps of his steps shall be straightned, and his own counsel shall cast him down; for he is cast into a Net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a Snare, &c.* see Job 18. 7. and 8. to verse 20, 21. where he saith *Such are the dwellings of the wicked, and of him that knoweth God.* For the Vanity and Wickedness of the *Papists* Doctrine and practice, will cast them down, and will in due time be the cause of their Ruine and Destruction; for God will not always suffer men to take the Honour to themselves, which is due only to God himself alone; for God, saith he, *will disappoint the devices of the Crafty, so as their hands cannot perform their enterprises, he taketh the wise in their own Craftiness; the Counsel of the froward is carried headlong.* But mark what follows, *Though for a time they run headlong in their own Devices, crafty Counsels, by Gods permission, God in due time will disappoint them for all their devices, that they shall meet with darkness in the day time, and grope at noon day as in the night,* John 5. 12, 13, 14. *and then the Righteous shall see it and rejoyce, and all Iniquity shall stop her mouth,* Verse 16. and *Psal.* 107. 42.

Papists setting themselves against God, by crafty counsel, will be their ruine in the end.

FINIS.